

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

FLEET VEHICLE ACQUISITION POLICY

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Purpose

To establish a policy governing the purchase of County vehicles that will increase fuel efficiency, lower emissions, and control costs. It is the intent of this policy to establish vehicle replacement criteria, limit the use of Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) to work assignments where they are essential, and to encourage the purchase of both Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) and Hybrid technology (gasoline/electric) vehicles to increase their percentage of the total County vehicle fleet. It is the goal of this policy to realize cost savings through fuel conservation and to protect the public health by lowering emissions.

Background

County Charter Section 501.5 authorizes the Board of Supervisors to provide for the regulation and operation of County vehicles. In accordance with this charter provision, the Board has adopted ordinances further defining the use of County-owned vehicles and designating the Director of General Services as the officer in charge of allocating and controlling the use of most County vehicles with the exception of those under the direction of the Department of Public Works. This policy applies to the responsibilities of both departments. The provisions of this policy are applicable to all County-owned vehicles without regard to the revenue source or fund from which they are acquired.

Over the last two decades, oil consumption in the United States has increased steadily, rising 36% from 1980 to 2001 with the transportation sector being responsible for all of that increase. All other sectors actually declined by 19% over the past two decades. Legislation passed in 1987 required the manufacture of more energy-efficient appliances. As a result, household energy use has fallen because of power-efficient appliances, technology-smart homes, and tight, new building codes. The average refrigerator uses one-third less power than it did 15 years ago. Alternatively, oil consumption in the transportation sector continues to increase at a staggering rate. A major reason for the large increase is the growing number of sport utility vehicles and other light duty trucks which are less fuel efficient than most cars, but which now account for more than one-half of all new vehicle sales. (Sources: Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy's Transportation Energy Data Book; The New York Times, June 20, 2004).

As a public agency responsible for both the public health and the expenditure of public funds, this Board has a duty to make decisions that protect air quality and conserve public funds. In the area of automobile use, both of these goals can be achieved by purchasing the most fuel-efficient, lowest-emission vehicles available. Today, those vehicles are Alternate Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) and Hybrid technology vehicles (gasoline/electric), which in 2005 comprise a little more than 2% of the County-owned fleet. SUVs comprise about 8% of the total County fleet excluding law enforcement vehicles.

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Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. All vehicles purchased for the County of San Diego's fleet will be
 - a) consistent with the Board-approved program to standardize fleet vehicles,
 - b) the most fuel-efficient and lowest emissions within the vehicle class/type,
 - c) commercially available, d) practical, and e) reasonably cost-competitive for the class/type of vehicles needed for specific assignments. The acquisition of AFV or Hybrid fleet vehicles will be highly encouraged.

The "most fuel-efficient vehicles" are those with a fuel economy rating (combined average of city and highway mileage) determined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that is within 10% of the highest rated vehicle meeting the criteria above.

2. If more than one vehicle model meets the criteria above or if fuel economy ratings have not been established for the candidate vehicles based on their Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) rating, preference will be given to the make and model that is certified to be in the most stringent emissions standard category. Currently in 2005, in order of decreasing stringency, these emission categories are: ZEV (Zero Emission Vehicles), AT PZEV (Advanced Technology Partial Zero Emission Vehicle), PZEV (Partial Zero Emission Vehicle), SULEV (Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicles), ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) and LEV (Low Emission Vehicle).
3. Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) will not be purchased unless justified based on a verified work assignment. Justifiable work assignments will include rough terrain/off-road travel, passenger/cargo requirements, and/or trailer towing requirements on a routine basis.
4. The Department of General Services will work with departments that operate County vehicles to identify wherever possible opportunities to replace fleet vehicles with lower emissions, more fuel-efficient vehicles.
5. The Directors of General Services and Public Works will set a goal to increase Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) and/or Hybrid vehicles to at least 25% of the current eligible fleet by the year 2012 when this policy will be reviewed. The eligible fleet includes those vehicles with similar functionality to the AFV or Hybrid vehicles. The goal will be predicated on the availability of AFV or Hybrid vehicles and funding availability. Due to their special needs, law enforcement vehicles will not be included in this AFV/Hybrid goal.

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6. Departments that request other than a standard County vehicle, mid-sized or smaller sedan, must provide justification by the Director of the requesting department and be approved by the respective Director of General Services or Public Works.

Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis, based on the intended use or application, vehicle specifications and/or over-riding cost considerations. Fuel economy and vehicle emissions shall be taken into account when selecting alternative vehicles.

7. The Directors of General Services and Public Works will, on an ongoing basis, evaluate the most economical time to replace County vehicles. Factors to be used in evaluating replacement vehicles will include vehicle age, accumulated usage, condition, maintenance/cost history, and suitability of assignment. The age/mileage criteria to be used in evaluating County vehicles for replacement will be:

Standard Sedan – 7 years / 100,000 miles

Patrol Sedan – 4 years / 90,000 miles

Patrol SUV – 5 years / 90,000 miles

Light Trucks/Vans – 10 years / 100,000 miles

Medium/Heavy Trucks – 10 years / 100,000 miles

Construction/Specialty Equipment – To be determined based on operational needs

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-12.

Board Action

02-24-04 (2)

03-22-05 (6)

CAO Reference

1. Department of General Services
2. Department of Public Works
3. Department of Purchasing & Contracting